

tailed prairie dogs, the mountain plover, as well as their predators, and a handful of other species that the government has determined to be threatened or endangered.

If one ran into a rare mineral on his land, his property value might increase overnight, but find an endangered species on your property, if that species decides to take up residence on your land, your property value will sink, because the Fish and Wildlife Service now determines what you do with your land, and any value received from production is subsequently lost.

While many homeowners in our country do not have to worry about a Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse or a mountain plover, a rural American, or more specifically a farmer, can see these little animals ruin their livelihood and take away much of their rights as landowners.

Often their losses are not even helpful in recovering the species. Out of thousands of Endangered Species Act listings, approximately 22 species have been delisted since 1973. Seven of those were due to extinction, eight of them due to data error, and only seven have actually been helped by the Endangered Species Act. That is less than 1 percent.

Private landowners, I believe, are the best stewards of their land. They are often willing to set aside a portion of their land to help preserve these valuable species. In fact, private landowners are the most responsible and most helpful for endangered and threatened species recovery, more so, I say, than the government is.

Unfortunately, farmers are often punished for voluntarily creating habitat suitable for these declining species by unknowingly giving the Fish and Wildlife Service a right of passage onto their land to monitor species recovery. Farmers and ranchers are often told what they can and cannot do with all of their land. That sometimes means they cannot produce the products that constitute the basis for their income.

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The Endangered Species Act is not only invasive, but it impacts disproportionately rural America. This law and the regulations that come with it often eliminate the only income that rural communities have.

In Colorado, here is an interesting example, Mr. Speaker, four fish which are found mostly in the rural part of my State, include two types of Chub, the squawfish and the sucker, are being protected with a budget of \$60 million. However, the economic impact of this recovery is \$650 million. Meanwhile, over in the State of Washington, anglers are paid a \$3 bounty for every squawfish caught measuring over 11 inches in their rivers.

The Endangered Species Act needs to be reformed, Mr. Speaker. It is just one

more example of the kinds of issues that the rural caucus intends to focus on in our efforts to reach out to rural America and elevate the prominence of rural issues on the floor of the House.

ESA affects all aspects of Rural America:

Road building—Rural communities typically have inferior transportation systems to begin with. The ESA doesn't help a community build a much needed road that may bring more commerce to the area. They must check first to see if they are invading on any endangered or threatened species' territory or they could face litigation or government fines. These delays can be both costly and devastating to a community that needs the business to survive.

Water use—Rural Communities tend to rely on less sophisticated systems to provide water for their communities. Unfortunately, these systems often rely on what is seen as potential habitat for endangered or threatened species. Towns often have to spend millions of dollars to divert water or create new systems to avoid impact to a species.

Construction in general—when a rural community wants to build a new hospital, school or maybe even a new store to bring some revenue to the area, they frequently face road blocks because the only land they have might be the preferred habitat of a species that may not even be living in the area.

Tax base—small towns may have to spend their small tax base to defend themselves from Environmental groups, or on costly modifications to their infrastructure, because of a species that may or not be in their community and, in some cases, may not actually be endangered or even exist.

When the Fish and Wildlife Service considers a listing in Rural America, the economic consequences are brought to their attention, but they often place the lowest priority on the communities they devastate.

While the Mountain Plover was being evaluated for listing, the government suggested if the plover was listed, farmers would have to cease normal farming practices from late April to mid-May because this coincides with the plover's nesting season. For a farmer in the Eastern Plains, this would be devastating because this is the only time of the year for planting most crops. USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service wrote that the plover's listing "may adversely impact a number of common agriculture practices in the short-grass prairie region in the United States." In already difficult times for farmers in America, the elimination of their planting season would cause extinction of the Rural Farmer in the eastern plains.

Farmers are often fined for continuing farming activities on their property, even if the species is not known to exist on their land, but just because their land might be potential habitat for an animal the government is concerned about.

The bottom line:

Federal agencies should not create mandates that will financially devastate entire communities.

Rural America is already burdened because they face various economic disadvantages.

Rural Americans cannot bear the burden of species recovery.

The government should take into consideration the economic consequences to already strained Rural Americans, and work with the communities, not against them.

#### ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL OCEAN DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution in support of establishing a National Ocean Day.

A National Ocean Day would help to focus the public's attention on the vital role the ocean plays in the lives of our nation's people and the significant impact our people have on the health of this vital resource.

The ocean covers 71 percent of the Earth's surface and is key to the life support systems of all creatures on this planet. It contains a wondrous abundance and diversity of life—from the smallest microorganism to the blue whale. The potential of the ocean's tremendous resources are not yet fully explored and likely includes life-saving medicines and treatments.

Two-thirds of the world's people live within 50 miles of a coast and one out of six American jobs is in fishing, shipping, or tourism. Some 90 percent of the world's trade is transported on the oceans.

The health of our ocean ecosystems are threatened by global warming, pollution, overfishing, and the destruction of coral reefs. We must take steps today to protect this irreplaceable resource.

The State of Hawaii has designated the first Wednesday of June as Ocean Day in recognition of the significant role the ocean plays in the lives of Hawaii's people, culture, history, and traditions. I hope my colleagues will join me in calling for a National Ocean Day to help focus nationwide attention on the need for responsible stewardship of this precious resource.

#### POWS AND MIAS IN VIETNAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, back in 1993 I met a gentleman named Binh Ly. And Mr. Ly told me and other Congressmen that he had a business partner, Mr. Nguyen Van Hao, who met with former Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown to seek his help in normalizing relations with Vietnam.

Mr. Ly said that Mr. Hao who met with Ron Brown three or four times told him that Ron Brown wanted \$700,000 in up-front money to start the normalization process with Vietnam. Mr. Brown said initially that he never met with Mr. Hoa, but later, it was found out that he did indeed meet with him three times.

The FBI, on October 2 of 1992, was reported in the New York Times to have discovered evidence that the Vietnamese government was preparing to